

By: Jake Wagman
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U.S. Rep. Lacy Clay — the House's chief liaison for the decennial census — is lauding President Barack Obama's choice to lead the national survey.

Last week, Obama tapped Robert M. Groves, a demographer at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, to be the new director of the Census Bureau.

Groves was an associate census director from 1990 to 1992 and, according to his c.v., worked as a prison guard in Vermont in 1968. According to the Washington Post, Groves is a native of Kansas City.

Currently, Groves' research has focused on why individuals do not participate in surveys, a key question as Clay and others urge the Census to avoid looking overlooking any group.

"Dr. Groves is a nationally recognized expert in statistical research and survey methodology," Clay said in a statement. "I look forward to working closely with him to reduce the undercount of minorities and to increase the national mail-back response rate for the census questionnaire."

Clay, a St. Louis Democrat, is chairman of the House Information Policy Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the Freedom of Information Act, the National Archives, and the Census.

Not only does the Census determine the country's official population, it's also used to decide the boundaries of Congressional districts.

Expect Clay — and Groves — to be in the spotlight as next year's big count approaches.